At least two persons in each congregation, the Minister and Board Chairperson, and perhaps others, receive this Packet. Please review this material carefully to determine how it needs to be shared most appropriately within your congregation.

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Christian Church in Alabama-Northwest Florida, 861 Highway 52, Helena, AL 35080
CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN ALABAMA-NORTHWEST FLORIDA
861 Highway 52
Helena, AL 35080
(205) 425-5245
(205) 425-5246 (fax)
e-mail: ainnwfl@aol.com
website: www.ainnwfldisciples.org

Regional Officers and Regional Staff
November, 2018

Moderator: Kathy Mason
16287 Hagler Mill Drive
Northport, AL 35475
205-339-6560 (h) 205-246-9652 (e)
e-mail: mason217@att.net

Moderator-Elect: Fannie Ashley
3126 Old Dobbins Road
Montgomery, AL 36116
334-279-1889 (h) 334-430-0255 (c)
e-mail: fannieashley@aol.com

First Vice Moderator: Jeanette Martinez
6307 Dallas Avenue
Pensacola, FL 32526
407-692-1582 (c)
e-mail: martinezjean65@yahoo.com

Second Vice Moderator: Ed Guindon
1317 Panorama Circle
Birmingham, AL 35216
205-617-0687 (c)
e-mail: ejguindo@southernaco.com

Secretary-Treasurer: John Nettles
1139 Terrace Acres Drive
Auburn, AL 36830
334-703-6360 (c)
e-mail: jwnarchitect@att.net

Regional Minister: John Mobley
861 Highway 52
Helena, AL 35080
205-425-5245 (w) 205-533-3810 (c)
e-mail: jpmobley2@aol.com

Associate Regional Minister: Dale Braxton
8420 County Rd. 45
Ft. Deposit, AL 36032
334-227-0011 (w) 334-412-4057 (c)
e-mail: braxtondale@hotmail.com

Youth Ministries Staff Person: Nisha Warrington
15561 Dockery Road
Coker, AL 35452
205-330-8968 (h) 205-454-2054 (c)
e-mail: Nisha7@aol.com

Administrative Assistant: Susan Henderson
861 Highway 52
Helena, AL 35080
205-425-5245 (w)
e-mail: ainnwfl@aol.com

Regional Representative to the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), 2018-2021:

Stuart Price
613 Owens Road
Auburn, AL 36830
334-821-1123 (h) 334-707-3165 (c)
e-mail: pricesb@auburn.edu
ITEMS OF INTEREST
(from within the Region)

OUTREACH GIVING

The giving through September, 2018, by congregations in Alabama-Northwest Florida to the Disciples Mission Fund and the four Special Day Offerings (Easter, Pentecost, Thanksgiving, and Christmas) has increased by 15.34% over the amount given for the same period in 2017. Church-wide gifts to Disciples Mission Fund and the four Special Day Offerings have decreased by 2.95% compared to the same period in 2017. Week of Compassion offerings in Alabama-Northwest Florida are showing a year-to-date decrease of 15.94% from 2017. Church-wide Week of Compassion receipts are showing a 39.3% decrease from the 2017 year-to-date total.

Disciples outreach ministries are carried out in partnership between general ministries, ministries of higher education, Regions, congregations, and other related ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The financial support given by your congregation enables this partnership to be effective in carrying out the ministry of Jesus Christ. Your commitment to our shared ministries is greatly appreciated.

NEWS FOR THE CLERGY

All commissioned ministers and persons in Ministry Care were sent a mailing in October asking them to select dates for their 2019 appointments with a subcommittee of the Committee on the Ministry. Responses are due by November 30.

All ordained ministers were sent information about their need to submit their Renewal of Standing Request forms for 2019. Forms may be submitted online, by fax, mail, or email. Forms are due by November 30.

CONGREGATIONS WITH MINISTERIAL VACANCIES

Hayneville, Woods Chapel
Mobile, Azalea Hills
Pensacola, First (Don McLaughlin is Interim Minister)
Robertsdale, First (Alan Woods is Interim Supply)
Tuskegee, Union (Edd Spencer is Interim)

JOYS AND CONCERNS OF THE CLERGY

Constance Nealey died in mid-October and her funeral service was held on October 20 at New Vision Christian Church, Birmingham, where she was a long-time member and an elder, in addition to being an ordained minister. The father of Diane Stephenson (Pensacola) continues his recovery in North Carolina from a fall and subsequent surgeries. Jose Diaz (Co-Pastor, Primera Iglesia Cristiana, Fort Walton Beach) made a trip on October 22 to the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville, FL, to be evaluated and placed on a kidney transplant list. The mother of Kathryn Menser (chaplain, Pensacola) continues her recovery in Texas from two surgeries she had recently.

(Please notify the Regional Office of other joys and concerns.)
2019 MINISTERS AND MATES RETREAT
January 14 - 16, 2019
Hilton Garden Inn, Orange Beach, AL
(Retreat begins with a Buffet Dinner at 6:30 p.m.)
Special Guest: Rev. Terri Hord Owens, General Minister and President
(registration and hotel information was sent out in early October)

2019 LUNCHEON FOR RETIRED MINISTERS and SPOUSES
January 14, 2019 - Noon - 2:00 p.m.
Hilton Garden Inn, Orange Beach, AL

Mark your calendars for the next required training opportunities for clergy:

Anti-Racism Training for Ministers – April 5-6, 2019
Healthy Boundaries for Clergy and Spiritual Teachers - March 22, 2019

Note: These workshops are required for all ministers who wish to maintain their ministerial standing. They must be
repeated after every 10 years.

Mark your Calendars!!

2019 General Assembly
of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

July 20-24, 2019 – Des Moines, Iowa
Theme – “Abide in Me”

DEMOGRAPHIC SERVICE AVAILABLE

Congregations in the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region can access demographic information on their
communities by going to www.Link2lead.com and following the directions given (click on “register” to get started).
This Region is providing this service at no cost to your congregation. If you have not downloaded recent
demographic information for your community, with the latest census updates, please do so in order to lead your
congregation to meet the needs of your community. Thank you for your gifts to the Disciples Mission Fund, which
makes this ministry possible.

Christian Church in Alabama-Northwest Florida, 861 Highway 52, Helena, AL 35080
NOVEMBER
3 CWF/Disciples Women Cabinet (10:00 a.m.) - Regional Office, Helena
3 Regional Assembly Planning Committee (10:00 a.m.) - First Christian Church, Meridian, MS
7 - 8 Senior Adult Retreat - St. Bernard Retreat and Conference Center, Cullman, AL
11 - 18 Thanksgiving Offering Promotion (for Disciples colleges and seminaries)

DECEMBER
2 Project Advisory Team for Pacific Islander Agape Church (5:00 p.m.) - First Christian Church, Pensacola
8 CSCA Christmas Party (Noon - 2:00 p.m.) - CSCA Office, Selma, AL
10 Committee on the Ministry (10:00 a.m.) - Regional Office, Helena
15 Executive/Personnel Committee (10:00 a.m.) - Regional Office
17 Regional Staff Planning (10:00 a.m.) - Regional Office
16 - 23 Christmas Offering Promotion (for Regional Ministries)

JANUARY, 2019
7 - 8 Kick-Off Retreat for 2019 Colleague Groups - Joe Wheeler State Park Lodge
14 Luncheon for Retired Ministers/Spouses - Hilton Garden Inn, Orange Beach
14 - 16 Ministers and Mates Retreat - Hilton Garden Inn, Orange Beach
18 - 20 Youthopia - YMCA-Camp Chandler
18 - 20 Young Adult Retreat - YMCA-Camp Chandler
23 Commissioning and Ordination North (9:15 a.m.) - Regional Office

FEBRUARY, 2019
2 CWF/Disciples Women Cabinet (10:00 a.m.) - Regional Office, Helena
5 Commissioning and Ordination South (9:15 a.m.) - United Christian, Montgomery
8 - 9 Congregational Transformation Event - First Christian Church, Birmingham
9 - 12 General Board of the Christian Church - Location TBD
12 - 14 College of Regional Ministers - Location TBD
10 - 17 Week of Compassion Promotion
16 Division of Administration and Stewardship (10:00 a.m.) - Regional Office
23 Regional Board (10:00 a.m.) - First Christian Church, Birmingham
28 - March 2 SERF Collaboration Event at Christmount - Black Mountain, NC

MARCH, 2019
4 - 7 Black Ministers Retreat - Embassy Suites - Nashville Airport - Nashville, TN
14 Optional Arrival Date for Men’s Retreat - Rolling Hills Retreat, Calera, AL
15 - 16 Men’s Retreat - Rolling Hills Retreat, Calera, AL
22 “Healthy Boundaries” workshop for clergy (9:00 a.m.) - Regional Office

(continued on back)
APRIL, 2019
5 - 6  Anti-Racism Training for clergy - First Christian Church, Montgomery
10  Commissioning and Ordination North (9:15 a.m.) - Regional Office
14 - 21  Easter Offering Promotion (for general ministries)

MAY, 2019
7  Commissioning and Ordination South (9:15 a.m.) - United Christian, Montgomery
26 - June 3  Pentecost Offering Promotion (for new congregation establishment)

JUNE, 2019
17 - 21  Junior Camp, Chi Rho Camp, CYF Conference - YMCA-Camp Chandler, Wetumpka, AL (tentative)
21 - 23  Genesis Camp and Discovery Camp - YMCA-Camp Chandler, Wetumpka, AL (tentative)
21 - 23  Regional Convocation Assembly - Snow Hill Christian Church, Mt. Willing

JULY, 2019
13  Commissioning and Ordination North (9:15 a.m.) - Regional Office
20 - 24  General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) - Des Moines, IA
27  Commissioning and Ordination South (9:15 a.m.) - United Christian, Montgomery

AUGUST, 2019
14  Commissioning and Ordination North (9:15 a.m.) - Regional Office
25  “Senior Adult Sunday” in Alabama-Northwest Florida

SEPTEMBER, 2019
3  Commissioning and Ordination South (9:15 a.m.) - United Christian, Montgomery
9 - 11  Southeast Regional Fellowship (SERF) Retreat - Christmount - Black Mtn., NC
27 - 29  Women’s Retreat - YMCA-Camp Chandler, near Wetumpka, AL
29 - Oct. 6  Reconciliation Offering Promotion (for anti-racism/pro-reconciliation)

OCTOBER, 2019
5  Division of Nurture (10:00 a.m.) - Regional Office
6  Reconciliation Offering and World Communion Sunday
9  Commissioning and Ordination North (9:15 a.m.) - Regional Office
REGIONAL PRAYER CALENDAR
FOR NOVEMBER, 2018

CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) IN ALABAMA-NW FLORIDA

Note: Congregations are urged to lift up in prayer during worship the congregation(s) designated on each Sunday of the year. Special prayers are encouraged for the ministers listed as well. A phone number is listed for each congregation (in some cases an e-mail address is also listed) in order for persons to make contact with that congregation to learn of special joys and concerns prior to the Sunday when it is listed.

November 4 - Tuscaloosa, First (205-758-2968) Tim Trussell-Smith Minister (e-mail: <reverendtints@gmail.com>)
November 11 - Valhermoso Springs, First (256-778-7921) Jeremy Harbin, Minister (e-mail: <pastorjeremyharbin@gmail.com>)
November 18 - Jasper, First (205-384-6302) C.J. Cobb, Minister (e-mail: <car3y.cobb@gmail.com>)
November 25 - Valley, Fairfax (334-756-3941) Duwayne Bridges, Minister (e-mail: <burningbridges@msn.com>)
Montgomery, United (334-262-3382) La’Rue Smith, Jr., Minister (e-mail: <lsmith7106@gmail.com>)

December 2 - Valley, River View (334-756-3538) Ron Shephard, Minister (email: <parson63@yahoo.com>)
December 9 - Pensacola, Westwood (850-456-2092) Betty and David Massey, Co-Pastors (e-mail: <dmassey745@aol.com> or <howdybetty@aol.com>)
December 16 - Ambassadors for Christ, Pamela Wilson, Minister (334-437-5423 or e-mail: <pamlove@camelliacom.com>)
December 23 - Hayneville, New Salem, Willie Smith, Minister (334-324-4338 or email: <pastorwjsmith@gmail.com>)
December 30 - Meridian, First, Mark Benson, Minister (252-933-3733 or email <mark@fccmeridian.com>)

January 6 - Athens, First (256-232-5611) Clint Coffey, Minister (e-mail: <jclintjr@juno.com>)
January 13 - Anniston, First (256-236-1316) Laura Hutchinson, Minister (e-mail: <laurahutchinson@bellsouth.net>)
January 20 - Auburn, Village (334-887-5111) Pat Parvin, Minister (e-mail: <pparvin@wellsmailing.com>)
January 27 - Dothan, First (334-792-2401) Bill Smith, Minister (e-mail: <bsndhn@gmail.com>)

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Alabama-Northwest Florida, 861 Highway 52, Helena, AL 35080
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TOTAL                              | 143,380.54 | 165,000.84 | 15.08   |

NOTE: THIS REPORT COMPARES GIVING FROM JAN - SEPT 2017 TO GIVING JAN - SEPT 2018

Christian Church in Alabama - Northwest Florida, 861 Hwy 52, Helena, AL 35080
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**NOTE:** THIS REPORT COMPARES GIVING FROM JAN - SEPT 2017 TO GIVING JAN - SEPT 2018
REFUND POLICY

Refund Policy for events sponsored by the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region: 100% refund for emergencies, provided that notification is received prior to the beginning of the event; 50% refund for emergencies in which notification (written) is made after the beginning of the event; 100% for non-emergencies if requested in writing at least seven days prior to the first day of the event; No refunds will be given for non-emergency cancellations after seven days prior to the beginning of the event. Written requests for refunds must be received by the Regional Office, 861 Highway 52, Helena, AL 35080 (email <alnwfl@aol.com>), within seven days of the last day of the event.

While refunds are not available other than as outlined in this policy, substitutions will be allowed as long as the original registrant, or responsible adult, is able to locate an eligible participant who is able to take the slot and as long as the original registrant, or responsible adult, communicates this information to the Regional Office. The Region will not be responsible in assisting in identifying a substitute. Notification should be provided to the Regional Office as soon as possible and any substitute must complete the necessary paperwork prior to arrival at the event.

Approved by the Regional Board, February 20, 2010

ADDENDUM

Non-registered persons are NOT eligible to take the place of persons who have already registered unless they communicate the exchange with the Regional Office at least 5 days prior to the start of the event. A late fee will be assessed as required by the Fee Schedule.

Approved by the Regional Board, February 24, 2018
THANKSGIVING OFFERING NOV 2018

www.DisciplesMissionFund.org

Colleges & Universities of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Seminaries & Divinity Houses of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Higher Education & Leadership Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- **Connect** congregations to each other
- **Foster** faith development
- **Gather** Disciples in camps, conferences, and assemblies
- **Nurture** the development of a new generation of pastors
- **Assist** churches in calling new ministers
- **Interpret** the global mission of the church
- **Represent** the church in ecumenical gatherings
- **Counsel** and pray with those who are troubled of spirit
- **Walk** with those in conflict
- **Lead** the church to address racism
- **Inspire** leaders to experiment and create
- **Witness** to the power of God to make things new

*Your gift to the Christmas offering supports the work of your Region, sustaining the life of our church. Thank you for providing your finest gift.*

*December 16th and 23rd*
Introduction Page for

Bulletin Inserts

Note: The following two pages in this Leader’s Packet are copies of what will be available as bulletin inserts on the four Sundays prior to Christmas. These will be made available electronically on the weeks prior to their intended use so that they may be printed in color and included in worship bulletins. You will be able to copy them in the quantity needed and cut them in half. They may be used in addition to promotional material that will be sent to you through the Office of General Minister and President.

The first page includes bulletin inserts for December 2 and 9. They are promotions for the 2018 Christmas Offering which will support the ministry of the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region.

The second sheet includes bulletin inserts for December 16 and 23. They are also promotions for the 2018 Christmas Offering which will support the ministry of the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region.

Your Help Is Needed:

A strong 2018 Christmas Offering in each of the Alabama-Northwest Florida congregations is very much needed in order to help this Region reach its ministry goals for 2019. Lay and clergy leaders are asked to be advocates for the ministry of the Region in their promotion of this special day offering.

In addition to using the next two pages as bulletin inserts, you may also use them in the following ways:

- as “Minutes for Mission” during worship
- as teaching tools in Sunday School classes, youth groups, men’s and women’s groups, Board meetings, Elders/Deacons meetings, etc.
- as flyers placed in church hallways
- as newsletter inserts

Christian Church in Alabama-Northwest Florida, 861 Highway 52, Helena, AL 35080
2018 Christmas Offering
Benefiting the ALNWFL Region

"I have been a member of The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) since my childhood and I have been blessed to serve as the Associate Regional Minister since July, 2005. Since becoming the Associate Regional Minister I have been blessed by the Region's commitment to dismantling images and things that do not look like the face of God. I have been blessed by our commitment to unity and making known the love of God to all people. The Regional church, as I see it, strives to live up to its mission: "to encourage and equip its congregations and pastors for the ministry of Jesus Christ in local communities and throughout the world, while seeking to nurture them into deeper relationship with God, with each other, and with the whole Church."

The 2018 Christmas Offering supports the ministry of Rev. Dale Braxton and all the Regional staff as they encourage the Region to be faithful to its mission.

2018 Christmas Offering
Benefiting the ALNWFL Region

"Summer 2018 was a remarkable experience. Young people from three different states and many congregations from around the region gathered at Camp Chandler. We worshipped, we prayed, we played, we sang, we laughed, we shared. We made new friends and reconnected with old. We celebrated the diversity of our region with campers and counselors from many different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Camp is a sacred time for many of our children, youth, and adult leaders. I am honored to be a part of this special ministry."

Your gifts to the Regional Christmas Offering support Rev. Nisha Warbington and allows the Region to provide access to sacred space for our children and youth to experience the love of Christ through camps, retreats, and other activities that are specifically planned to nurture the young people of our Region.

The 2018 Christmas Offering will be collected in most congregations on December 16 and 23. Please give generously!
"May 8, 2018, marked 18 years of service as Administrative Assistant/Office Manager for the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region. As I was driving home after the Regional Assembly this past April, my mind drifted through the different aspects of the weekend. I was told that the sermons and music and workshops were phenomenal! At the registration table, however, there were interactions that really had nothing to do with the formalities of a regional event. I shared smiles and laughter, hugs, and even a few tears, as I engaged in conversations about my life and heard stories about the goings-on in others’ lives. I put new faces with new names, loved on some people I’ve known for a very long time, and felt the love that others have for me. Through these encounters, I was reminded that my work extends far beyond the doors of the office I spend my time in. I was reminded that I have made relationships that I will forever hold in my heart. I pray that somewhere along the way I have been a blessing to others, both personally and professionally, as so many have blessed me throughout the years."

Your support of the 2018 Christmas Offering enables the Region to continue to have competent office administration, bookkeeping, and staff support through our Administrative Assistant/Office Manager for the past 18 years, Susan Henderson.

The 2018 Christmas Offering will be collected in most congregations on December 16 and 23. Please give generously!

"What a blessing it is to be part of the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region. In almost 23 years of serving as Regional Minister, I have been heartened by the spirit of unity and compassion in this Region. The Regional church reflects the love and spirit of Jesus Christ in its relationships, programs, and structures. I trust that generations that will follow us will inherit a Regional church that is equipping disciples to continue to reflect the love of the One we follow, even Jesus Christ."

Your support of the 2018 Christmas Offering enables John Mobley and all of the other Regional staff to work with leaders and congregations to be faithful to their mission of witness and service in the name of Christ.

The 2018 Christmas Offering will be collected in most congregations on December 16 and 23. Please give generously!
REGIONAL MINISTRIES SUPPORTED THROUGH OUTREACH DOLLARS

When an individual contributes to the Annual Fund or when a congregation in Alabama-Northwest Florida makes a gift to the Disciples Mission Fund or to the Christmas Special Day Offering, the following ministries of the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region are made possible:

Camp and Conference
- Christian Youth Fellowship (CYF) Conferences (each summer)
- Chi Rho (Junior High) Camps (each summer)
- Junior Camps (older elementary age) (each summer)
- Discovery Camps (younger elementary age) (each summer)
- Genesis Camps (kindergarten and first grade)
- Specialty Camps, such as Beach Camp and Family Camp

Young Adult Ministries
- Support for Congregations in their outreach to young adults
- Winter Young Adult Retreat (each January)
- Young Adult Green Team ministries
- Young Adult Mission Opportunities

Retreats for Spiritual Growth and Fellowship
- “Youthtopia” (for Chi Rho and CYF youth - each January)
- Women’s Retreats (each September or October)
- Men’s Retreats (each spring)
- Senior Adult Retreats (each fall)

Leadership Development/Educational Events
- Christian Women’s Fellowship/Disciples Women (CWF/DW) Events (each spring)
- Training/Networking for Adult Leaders of Youth
- Region-wide Training Workshops (annually)
- Convocation-sponsored workshops (each June)
- Hispanic Ministries Commission events (annually)
- Youth Council Officers Training/Orientation (biennially)
- Training for Moderators and Board Chairpersons (biennially)
- “Thrive” Events for congregational leaders
- Workshops on Stewardship and Outreach
- Presentations from Global Mission Partners
- Facilitating Global Mission Trips and Partnerships
- Training in “Children Worship and Wonder”

Ministry Support
- Ministers/Mates Retreats (each January)
- Clergy Colleague Groups
- Continuing Education workshops
- Hispanic Ministers’ Training at LTS (annually)
- Anti-Racism Training (every two years)
- Boundary Training (annually)
- Relational Support through the Ministry Support Network
- Support for non-parish ministers
- Ministry Assistance Program
- Funding for Ministerial Education and Support
- Providing Accountability for ministers, maintaining standards for ministerial standing
- Enlisting mentors/advisors for persons in Ministry Care
- Giving counsel to ministers in the Search and Call process
- and facilitating their consideration by congregations

(Continued on back)
Assemblies
Regional Assemblies (every 2 years)
Convocation Assemblies (every 2 years)
Hispanic Encounters (every year)

Congregational Support
Listening Conferences
Congregational Transformation Events (in non-Regional Assembly years)
Sponsorship in Ministry Planning (with Hope Partnership)
Boundary Training for Volunteers
Children Worship and Wonder Training
Consultations on Congregational Programming
Consultations in times of conflict and/or crisis
Sharing in significant events in congregational life
Maintaining a resource/lending library for congregations
Giving counsel to search committees and facilitating their
consideration of prospective ministerial candidates

Communications
“Regional News and Notes” (6 issues a year - sent electronically)
E-mail regarding pastoral concerns of clergy
Leader's Packets by mail (6 times a year - also sent electronically as “Information for Leaders”)
Sharing information/resources from the General Church
Offering resources and ideas through a website
Maintaining permanent files on congregations and clergy

Facilitating Shared Ministries
Establishing and receiving new congregations
Miracle Days (normally every two years)
Mission trips - Partnerships in Honduras
Reconciliation and Anti-Racism Ministries
Justice Ministries through Alabama Arise and Faith in Action Alabama
Resource sharing between congregations
Supporting involvement with Christian Services for Children in Alabama (CSCA)

Leadership and Pastoral Care
Facilitating Colleague Groups for Pastors
Pastoral relationships with clergy and lay leaders
Advocating for greater unity and inclusivity in the church
Giving witness to covenantal relationships and facilitating partnerships between congregations and other
entities of the church
Promoting faithful stewardship of the church's resources
Promoting new forms of mission and ministry

How Much Should Our Congregation Give to the Disciples Outreach?

In past general assemblies of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), congregations have been urged to give
at least a tithe (10% of all receipts) to Disciples outreach ministries through Disciples Mission Fund and the Special Day
Offerings. Some congregations exceed the tithe, some give less. Whatever your congregation gives for Disciples
Outreach, it should be given not out of obligation but out of gratitude for the privilege of being a part of the common
mission of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). These dollars result in the faithful communication of God's
redeeming love for humanity, made known in Jesus Christ.

Thank you for your commitment to the whole mission which God is giving to the Christian Church (Disciples
of Christ).

November, 2018

Christian Church in Alabama-Northwest Florida, 861 Highway 52, Helena, AL 35080
2019 MINISTERS AND MATES RETREAT
Hilton Garden Inn – Orange Beach, Alabama

January 14-16, 2019

Special Guest
Rev. Terri Hord Owens
General Minister and President
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Theme
“Turn to Wonder”

Rev. Terri Hord Owens was elected as General Minister and President for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in 2017. She will be sharing her reflections after nearly 18 months in this ministry, and she will challenge us as she shares her vision and hopes for the church. Her husband, Walter Owens, will be joining us and adding to our time together. This retreat will be a great opportunity for us to get to know these outstanding leaders in a personal way.

Cost – $40 per person
(includes administrative costs and cost of Monday banquet)

******************************************************************************
The Ministers and Mates Retreat is open to all ministers with standing—active or retired, commissioned or ordained—in the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region. Those who are under the care of the Committee on the Ministry in the Region are also welcome to attend. Hotel information and registration forms were sent to all ministers with standing in October. Please contact the Regional office if this information is needed. Join us for a stimulating event, combined with opportunities for rest and relaxation in a beautiful setting.

Christian Church in Alabama-NW Florida, 861 Highway 52, Helena, AL 35080
PRE-EVENT LUNCHEON
FOR RETIRED MINISTERS AND SPOUSES

Hilton Garden Inn – Orange Beach, Alabama

January 14, 2019
Noon - 2:00 p.m. (Second Floor of Hotel)

Leadership Provided by
The Ministry Support Network
in the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region

Theme
“The Greatest Stories Never Told”

Throughout the year, the Ministry Support Network is engaged in giving pastoral care and support to persons who are active in ministry. In addition to this important work, the Network sponsors an annual luncheon for retired ministers and (if applicable) their spouses. The 2019 Luncheon will be a time of meaningful interaction as rarely-told stories will be shared on a variety of topics.

Cost – $10 per person

Christian Church in Alabama-NW Florida, 861 Highway 52, Helena, AL 35080
2019 Youhtopia
Winter Retreat for Chi Rho & CYF (Grades 6-12)
At CAMP CHANDLER
www.campchandler.org

Join us as we enjoy a weekend of games, challenges, and adventures led by your Regional Youth Council

WHEN: January 18-20, 2019
(Begins at 7:00 pm Friday - ends at 10:00 am Sunday)

Cost: $130.00 (includes lodging, meals, snacks, and T-shirt)

Each church is expected to provide one paid registered adult for every 1-6 youth attending the event. All adults attending must register and pay fees.

What to Bring?

BIBLE
Offering
Sleeping bag/bedding
Fitted twin sheet/Pillow
Toiletries
Towel

SNACKS to share
(Girls Sweet and Boys Salty)

Sturdy shoes
Flashlight
Jacket/Raincoat
Camera
Closed toe shoes for high ropes
Bug spray

We Are a Drug-Free Community - no drugs, alcohol, or tobacco!!!
YOUTH REGISTRATION FORM FOR Youhtopia
DEADLINE: January 8th, 2019

Complete this from along with the Medical Information and Agreement page
and mail to:

Christian Church in Alabama-Northwest Florida, 861 Hwy 52, Helena, AL 35080

NAME

M/F _______ GRADE _______

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE_________ ZIP_________

HOME PHONE _______________ CELL PHONE_________________

EMAIL

T-SHIRT SIZE - ____________
(subject to availability if registration is not received by deadline)

CONGREGATION______________________________

(Include City)_______________________________

ADULT CHAPERONE ACCOMPANYING YOU:

_________________________________________
2019 COVENANT for Participants
CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)
IN ALABAMA-NORTHWEST FLORIDA

Please read (or have read to you) the following. Sign this covenant, obtain parent signature and mail with completed camp registration form and appropriate fees. Thank you for your help!

- I will come to retreat expecting to grow in my faith and in relationship with others, becoming a special part of the retreat community. In order to do this, I covenant to follow all the rules and guidelines set by the Christian Church in Alabama Northwest Florida and any others set for this event. With this, I commit myself to the following: To be on time, attend and be attentive for all activities and participate in them fully.
- Have fun and make sure everyone else has a great time.
- To respect each other regardless of age and to respect others' feelings and thoughts.
- I will not go from adult to adult until I get the answer I want.
- Be myself and open to making new friends.
- Be inclusive at all times.
- Cooperate with the leaders, keynoter, director and other staff members at all times.
- Be respectful of God's beauty in this special place and only leave footprints behind.
- To take all that I learn about God and share it with my friends, family and church.

______________________________________________________________________________
Youth Signature

______________________________________________________________________________
Parent/Guardian Signature

2019 MEDICAL INFORMATION AND RELEASE
MEDICAL HISTORY

Please answer with (yes or no):
- _______ Do you have any health problems?
- _______ Are you currently under the care of a physician or psychologist?
- _______ Do you require handicapped-accessible facilities?
- _______ Do you have any food or other allergies?
- _______ Do you expect to have any difficulty with normal event activities?
- _______ Do you take any prescription medication?

Detail All Medical and Dietary Issues Below:
(if more room is needed, please attach a sheet to this form)

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Circle Below: Should your child be allowed appropriate over-the-counter medications to be given as needed?

Yes or No

SIGNATURE, AGREEMENT AND RELEASE:
In case of emergency, I hereby give permission to the physician selected by the camp director to hospitalize, order injections, anesthesia or surgery for the child named above in order to secure necessary, proper medical care. I understand that I will be contacted immediately in the event that something unforeseen happens requiring my attention. I release the Noah's Ark staff and management, camp directors and counselors, and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Alabama-Northwest Florida and its staff, from all responsibilities in case of sickness or accidents causing injury occurring during camp. I have provided proof of insurance to those in charge.

______________________________________________________________________________
Signature of Parent/Guardian
(Signature required regardless of age of camper)

______________________________________________________________________________
Emergency Contact(s) Name & Phone Number:

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Insurance Information:

________________________________________
Name of Insurance Company, Address and Telephone Number

Member Name Member ID

THIS MEDICAL FORM MUST BE COMPLETED TO PROCESS YOUR REGISTRATION.
Complete this page along with Medical Form and Covenant page and mail to:
Christian Church in Alabama-Northwest Florida, 861 Hwy 52, Helena, AL 35080

NAME____________________________________

M/F_______ Have You Completed Safe Gatherings Training? ___ Yes ___ No

ADDRESS____________________________________

CITY____________________________________

STATE________________________ ZIP________________________

HOME PHONE ______________________ CELL PHONE ______________________

EMAIL____________________________________

T-SHIRT SIZE - __________
(subject to availability if registration is not received by deadline)

CONGREGATION____________________________________

(INCLUDE CITY)____________________________________

Safe Gatherings trainings is required for ALL Regional Youth Volunteers. If you have not already completed this training, please contact Nisha7@qol.com to begin the process. While adults are allowed to attend events without the training, they are not able to serve in the full capacity of leadership during the weekend. The process can take several weeks so please contact Nisha ASAP if you need to complete Safe Gatherings.
2019 COVENANT for Participants
CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)
IN ALABAMA-NORTHWEST FLORIDA

Please read (or have read to you) the following. Sign this covenant, obtain parent signature and mail with completed camp registration form and appropriate fees. Thank you for your help!

- I will come to retreat expecting to grow in my faith and in relationship with others, becoming a special part of the retreat community. In order to do this, I covenant to follow all the rules and guidelines set by the Christian Church in Alabama Northwest Florida and any others set for this event. With this, I commit myself to the following:
  - To be on time, attend and be attentive for all activities and participate in them fully
  - Have fun and make sure everyone else has a great time
  - To respect each other regardless of age and to respect others' feelings and thoughts
  - I will not go from adult to adult until I get the answer I want
  - Be myself and open to making new friends
  - Be inclusive at all times
  - Cooperate with the leaders, keynoter, director and other staff members at all times
  - Be respectful of God’s beauty in this special place and only leave footprints behind
  - To take all that I learn about God and share it with my friends, family and church

Signature

2019 MEDICAL INFORMATION AND RELEASE
MEDICAL HISTORY

Please answer with (yes or no):
- ______ Do you have any health problems?
- ______ Are you currently under the care of a physician or psychologist?
- ______ Do your require handicapped-accessible facilities?
- ______ Do you have any food or other allergies?
- ______ Do you expect to have any difficulty with normal event activities?
- ______ Do you take any prescription medication?

Detail All Medical and Dietary Issues Below:
(if more room is needed, please attach a sheet to this form)

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

SIGNATURE, AGREEMENT AND RELEASE:
In case of emergency, I hereby give permission to the physician selected by the camp director to hospitalize, order injections, anesthesia or surgery for the child named above in order to secure necessary, proper medical care. I understand that I will be contacted immediately in the event that something unforeseen happens requiring my attention. I release the Noah’s Ark staff and management, camp directors and counselors, and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Alabama-Northwest Florida and its staff, from all responsibilities in case of sickness or accidents causing injury occurring during camp. I have provided proof of insurance to those in charge.

Emergency Contact(s) Name & Phone Number:

________________________________________

________________________________________

Insurance Information:

________________________________________

Name of Insurance Company, Address and Telephone Number

________________________________________

Member Name Member ID

THIS MEDICAL FORM MUST BE COMPLETED TO PROCESS YOUR REGISTRATION.
YMCA OF GREATER MONTGOMERY – CAMP CHANDLER
RELEASE AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY
AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT

In consideration for being permitted to utilize the facilities, services and programs of The Young Men's Christian Association of Montgomery, Inc. ("YMCA"), the undersigned, on behalf of himself or herself and his or her heirs, personal representatives and next-of-kin, does hereby agree to the following:

1. THE UNDERSIGNED HEREBY RELEASES, WAIVES, DISCHARGES AND COVENANTS NOT TO SUE the YMCA, its successors and assigns, and its directors, officers, employees, and agents (collectively, the Releasees) from any and all claims, demands, damages, actions, causes of actions, or suits of whatever kind or nature arising or resulting from any loss or damage to property or injury or death to person, whether caused by the negligence of Releasees or otherwise, while he or she is in, upon, or about the premises of the YMCA or using any of its facilities, services or equipment, or participating in any program or activity offered by or affiliated with the YMCA.

2. THE UNDERSIGNED HEREBY AGREES TO INDEMNIFY AND HOLD HARMLESS the Releasees and each of them from any loss, liability, damage, or cost they may incur, whether caused by the negligence of the Releasees or otherwise, due to his or her presence in, upon, or about the premises of the YMCA or use of its facilities, services or equipment, or participation in any program or activity offered by or affiliated with the YMCA.

3. THE UNDERSIGNED HEREBY EXPRESSLY ASSUMES FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR AND RISK OF BODILY INJURY, DEATH OR PROPERTY DAMAGE, whether caused by the negligence of Releasees or otherwise, while he or she is in, upon, or about the premises of the YMCA or using any of its facilities, services or equipment, or participating in any program or activity offered by or affiliated with the YMCA.

In the event of injury, the undersigned hereby authorizes the Releasees to provide or cause to provide such medical care and treatment to him or her as may be necessary and appropriate. The undersigned understands that he or she is solely responsible for all costs incurred for such medical care or treatment.

The undersigned hereby gives his or her permission to the YMCA to use indefinitely, without limitation or obligation, photographs, film footage, or tape recordings which may include the image or voice of the undersigned for the purpose of promoting or interpreting YMCA programs and activities.

I HAVE READ AND VOLUNTARILY SIGN THIS FORM AND AGREE TO ITS TERMS.

______________________________
Signature of Participant

______________________________
Date

______________________________
Parent or Guardian of Minor Child or Ward

I, as parent or guardian of the above named minor, hereby give my permission for my child or ward to participate in any program or activity offered by or associated with the YMCA and further agree, individually and on behalf of said minor or ward, to be bound by all of the terms set forth above.

______________________________
Signature of Parent or Guardian

______________________________
Date
YOUNG ADULT
WINTER RETREAT

YMCA-Camp Chandler
near Wetumpka, Alabama

January 18 -20, 2019

Theme

“Faithful Citizenship”

Guest Facilitator

Rev. Tabitha Isner
Disciples Minister in Montgomery, Alabama

Cost — $50 per person
(This event is subsidized by the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region)

The Young Adult Winter Retreat is open to all who consider themselves to be young adults in the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region. Persons in this group might be students, and non-students, married or single, with children and without children. Young adults in Alabama-Northwest Florida are a diverse group, yet they all are needing to be nurtured in their faith and strengthened through their fellowship with one another. Being together in the retreat setting will allow participants to grow closer to God and to each other.

Christian Church in Alabama-NW Florida, 861 Highway 52, Helena, AL 35080
YOUNG ADULT WINTER RETREAT 2019
(With Rev. Tabitha Isner, Ordained Minister in Montgomery, Alabama)

January 18 - 20, 2019 ---- YMCA-Camp Chandler
Check-in begins as early as 4:00 p.m. on Friday. The Retreat officially begins after dinner on Friday at 7:00 p.m. and ends Sunday morning after worship and before lunch

Please note: Lodging is dormitory-style. 
Attendees are reminded to bring their own bedding, towels, and toiletries.

"Faithful Citizenship"

-- Please detach and return --

REGISTRATION FORM
(Use a separate form for each person)

Name: ____________________________________________

Address: ____________________________________________
Street ____________________ City ________ State ________ Zip ________

Phone No.: ____________________ E-Mail Address: ____________________

Congregation ____________________________________________

**Please note any food allergies on this form.

Any young adult who is wanting to participate in this event but who is unable to pay the registration fee is asked to contact John Mobley <jpmobley2@aol.com>. Limited financial assistance may be available. All grants will be kept confidential.

Please enclose payment of $50 with this Registration Form
Payment must be received by January 11, 2019.

Mail To:

Christian Church in AL-NW FL, 861 Highway 52, Helena, AL 35080 Phone (205-425-5245) Fax (205-425-5246)
MEN’S RETREAT
(Rolling Hills Retreat Center - Calera, Alabama)

March 15 - 16, 2019
(Registration/Check-in begins as early as 2:00 p.m. Retreat officially begins with dinner on March 15 at 6:00 p.m. and ends Saturday by 2:30 p.m.)
Optional Arrival Date - March 14, 2019 Men may come a day early for fishing, hiking, table games, and fellowship time (Added cost - $35, no meals included).

“Abide in Me”

Resource Leader:

Rev. Gilberto Collazo
President, Hope Partnership for Missional Transformation

Registration Cost: $90/person ($80 if received before March 1)
** Saturday Only - $60/person ($40 if received before March 1)

Christian Church in Alabama-Northwest Florida, 861 Highway 52, Helena, AL 35080
MEN'S RETREAT 2019

March 15 - 16, 2019 — Rolling Hills Retreat Center, Calera, AL
Registration/Check-in begins after 2:00 p.m. on Friday. The Retreat officially begins with dinner on Friday at 6:00 p.m. and ends Saturday by 2:30 p.m.

Optional Arrival Date - March 14, 2019 Some men may wish to come a day early for fishing, hiking, table games, and fellowship (Added cost - $35.00, no meals included).

Rooms at Rolling Hills Retreat Center are motel-type rooms. Bedding and towels are provided. All men will be assigned a roommate. Roommate preferences will be considered.
Men are also reminded to bring their Challenge Goal offerings to the Retreat.

“Abide in Me”

---------------------------------------------------------------------------------
REGISTRATION FORM
(Please use a separate form for each person)

Name: ____________________________

Address: ____________________________
Street __ City __ State __ Zip __

Phone No.: ____________________________ E-Mail Address: ____________________________

Please check one: ______ I will arrive March 14, one day early ______ I will arrive March 15
(If arriving on March 14, add $35 to registration payment)
_______ I will be coming Saturday only (cost is $60, or $40 before March 2)

Roommate Preference: ____________________________

Will this be your first Alabama-NW Florida Men’s Retreat? ______ Yes ______ No

Congregation ____________________________

Limited financial assistance may be available upon request by pastors to either David Lynch, Men’s President, or John Mobley. All financial assistance grants will be kept confidential.

Please enclose payment of $90 with Registration Form (or $80, if received prior to March 1). This payment covers the cost of registration, three meals, and lodging at Rolling Hills. Persons coming for Saturday only should pay $60 (or $40, if received prior to March 1), which covers breakfast and lunch on Saturday.

Payment in full must be received no later than March 8.
By registering for this event, you agree to the terms of the Region’s Refund Policy.

Mail To:

Christian Church in AL-NW FL, 861 Highway 52, Helena, AL 35080 Phone (205-425-5245) Fax (205-425-5246)
Continuing Education Opportunity for Ministers and Persons in Ministry Care

"HEALTHY BOUNDARIES"

a Workshop for Ministers and those in the Ministry Care Program of the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region WHO HAVE NOT PREVIOUSLY COMPLETED THIS WORKSHOP IN THE PAST 10 YEARS

Attendance at this workshop is required in order to maintain Ministerial Standing or be continued in Ministry Care. Must be repeated after 10 years.

Resource Leaders:

Dr. Dale Braxton and
Dr. Nisha Warbington
(Certified Trainers through the FaithTrust Institute)

FRIDAY, MARCH 22, 2019
9:00 a.m. until 3:30 p.m.

Note: For those with Ministerial Standing or who are in the Ministry Care Program who are required to attend this workshop, there is no cost to participate. For all others, the cost is $50. Reservations are necessary for ALL persons planning to attend and must be made by calling 205-425-5245 or by emailing <alnwfl@aol.com> by March 15.

Location of the Workshop
Regional Office
861 Highway 52, Helena, AL 35080
How to Develop Habits for Well-Being

Seminaries and social work programs often ask their students to create a self-care plan. Not only does this send a message about self-care while pursuing a degree, ordination, or certification, it also makes clear that self-care is a life-long commitment for those who serve the church and others. High demands and weak support systems can foster a toxic environment for clergy health. Therefore, some experts see a problem with the idea of self-care, which suggests that responsibility for clergy well-being falls entirely on the pastor. Clergy health and well-being involve three systems: the individual pastor’s lifestyle, family and friends, and the congregation or denomination. Although all three systems share responsibility, this issue focuses primarily on the role of clergy.

Making Better Choices

Mounting research finds that genetic differences are less important for longevity and health than previously asserted. Twin studies reveal that genetics only account for 25% of the defining forces related to life span. What accounts for the rest? Lifestyle choices and habits. For example, Sanjay Gupta lists five habits that can extend a person’s life by a decade or more: eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly, maintaining a healthy body weight, consuming alcohol in moderation, and never smoking.1

Models of well-being incorporate additional elements beyond physical health because studies find clear links between mental, social, and physical health. For instance, scientists are beginning to pay attention to a sixth healthy habit: maintaining a strong social network. Although positive emotions and moods relate to overall health, they only produce short-term impacts. Positive mental health combined with high psychological and social functioning delivers greater long-term health.2

Map Your Self-Care Plan

Before you can make deliberate changes to construct a personalized self-care plan, you must know where you are already strong and where you need to focus to see improvement. The self-care wheel, available in multiple versions, is such a tool and illustrates the interaction between multiple dimensions of daily life.3 Imagine a pie cut into six equal parts with each section representing one area of your life: physical, psychological, emotional, spiritual, personal, and professional. If you imagine the center as zero and the outer edge of the pie section as ten, you can rank your satisfaction level within each area by drawing a line to create your own outer edge for each area.

When the findings are graphed onto the pie, some sections are longer or shorter than others. The shorter areas reflect areas of life where functioning can be improved. For example, lower scores in the spiritual area might prompt someone to explore new spiritual practices, participate in a small spirituality group, or other actions aimed at creating greater levels of life satisfaction and balance. Ultimately, you see your full life balance picture and can begin to consider how to improve the whole.
Other approaches entail completing short questionnaires (see the Buffalo School of Social Work for an easy to complete example). Or clergy can honestly answer questions like:

- How often in the past two years has poor physical health, emotional problems, or family demands interfered with your ministry effectiveness? How do you cope in such situations?
- What practices do you regularly engage in that sustain you physically, emotionally, and spiritually? Are additional efforts needed to support your well-being and reduce stress?
- How would a spouse or best friend answer these questions? Your coworkers?

The value of these approaches is that the agency for making better choices rests with the individual. A friend of the late Senator John McCain remarked that he was not very good at lying to himself. McCain would joke that his biggest accomplishment as a Navy pilot was crashing five jet planes, reflecting his belief that “We cannot forever hide the truth about ourselves, from ourselves.”

Authenticity or self-integrity is a gift to be treasured.

Create and Enact Your Self-Care Plan

Just as there is no “right way” to experience God, there is no “right way” to find a greater sense of well-being. Once you have mapped what your current life balance looks like on the pie chart and honestly answered questions about your life habits, take time to make a solid plan. For the areas of your life where you are strong, write a few sentences about how to maintain or even enhance those areas. For areas that are closer to zero, write down goals to help you increase your satisfaction. You also want to periodically check in on how you’re doing with these goals to see if you need to revise any of them as your life changes. It is okay to begin with only one or two areas. Finally, find someone who cares about you to hold you accountable and who is willing to help you achieve these goals. It’s best to find someone in a similar situation as you, such as another clergy member. Share your self-care plans and meet regularly to check in with each other.

Remember that people will be motivated to form new habits by different incentives and identities. These differences mean that no two people will choose an identical path to a more satisfying life and that the goals you set must be tailored to work for you.

Congregational and Denominational Support

Every congregation should have a functioning personnel committee because a church cannot succeed unless the pastor succeeds. The regular interaction between the committee and the pastor contributes to the pastor’s overall ministry and life satisfaction, assists the pastor in establishing priorities and boundaries, and supports the pastor’s self-care choices. The pastor and the committee members must share a vision for ministry and a shared understanding of the pastor’s gifts.

Several denominations began to recognize that support for pastors needed to extend beyond seminary. For example, the Church Pension Group of the Episcopal Church started CREDO, a conference for pastors aimed at enhancing clergy wellness. Participants explore four areas—spiritual, vocational, financial, and physical/psychological health—in a week-long community experience. The Board of Pensions, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), launched a similar national clergy program to help pastors examine their health and replenish their spirit. Other judicatories and denominations invite their clergy to workshops and experiences that help pastors deal with stress, nurture spiritual vitality, and promote flourishing ministry. Congregational leaders should encourage the pastor to participate in such conferences.

Well-Being Is a Journey

The good news of the gospel says again and again, “Behold, I make all things new” (Rev 21:5). People, who are made in the image of God, are free to make choices. And they are free to make new choices. Begin with one new self-care practice today. Begin with one new way of finding joy in life. Try it on and risk failure. Pastors and people of faith can count on the promise of John 10:10: “I have come that they might have life and have it abundantly.”

5. https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/john_mccain_135484
Holding conversations with neighbors can provide church leaders with vital information about the community. A one-on-one interview takes the process a step further by structuring the conversation around a set of questions prepared in advance so that church leaders can focus on what matters most: tailoring ministry that is most appropriate for this neighborhood, these people, and this time.

**Listening: An Essential First Step**

Joy Skjegstad, who consults with churches on community ministry, finds that many churches prefer to skip the listening step and simply launch into a new project. “It is faster to plan programming without it, because listening takes time.” Church leaders also tell her that they find it intimidating to meet people they do not know, especially when people in the community come from different ethnic, cultural, socioeconomic, or religious backgrounds than church members. Finally, Skjegstad suspects that some church leaders do not want new information to contradict their long-held assumptions, arguing that “community listening can be a humbling process. People in the community may tell you things you don't want to hear.”

Faith-based community organizers consider one-on-one interviews to be an essential tool in getting to know the neighborhood. The Reverend Dennis Jacobsen, an Evangelical Lutheran pastor and community organizer, observes that organizing efforts can falter without relationship building. The one-on-one interview is a primary way to achieve this goal. “Organizing misses its calling,” Jacobsen writes, “when it becomes a swirl of frenetic activity, . . . running past and over human beings. One-ons slow things down, restore needed focus, and serve as a reminder of the human dimension of this work.”

**Interviewing Basics**

Interviews come in three styles: structured, unstructured, and semi-structured. If you want to get to know the person or community, try an *unstructured interview*. Start with a broad question about your interviewee’s experience and then let the conversation flow in whatever direction it will. However, if you want to assess a community’s needs or analyze a particular problem, a *structured interview* may serve the purpose better. In this case, ask questions about specific issues. At the extreme end of the structured format, this interview may resemble a verbal questionnaire with answer options limited to yes or no answers. The *semi-structured interview* strikes a compromise between the two styles, utilizing predetermined questions while allowing respondents to use whatever language they are most comfortable with or allowing them to wander from the topic as it suits them.

A basic unstructured interview may be the easiest type of interview to perform. Social scientists Andrea Fontana and James Frey offer the following seven steps for preparing for and carrying out an interview.

1. **Access the setting.** How do you “get in to” wherever the interview will take place? This question must be asked because interviews typically do not take place on your own
turf but in the field. How you access the setting depends on the group you are studying. One researcher-author had to buy a motorcycle and hang out where Hells Angels were known to gather in order to interview them for a book he was writing. While this may be an extreme case, it illustrates a point: in order to interview someone, you need to enter their setting, not invite them to yours.

2. Understand the language and culture. An interpreter may help you understand the person you interview, but that is no guarantee you will understand the culture. If you are non-Hispanic, it may feel puzzling to answer a volley of questions about whether you are married and other personal questions about familial relationships. Yet the family holds a key place in Hispanic culture. Ignoring this reality may result in "mis-translation" even if you have a great interpreter.

3. Decide how to present yourself. Whether you dress up or dress down may be subject to misunderstanding. Dressing up may create suspicion among some populations such as undocumented immigrants or blue-collar workers, who might misinterpret your intentions. On the other hand, if you are interviewing parishioners in a Sunday morning church setting at a Black church, dressing down might be seen as disrespectful to God. Best practice in many cases might be to try matching your dress to that of the person being interviewed.

4. Locate an informant. You may need someone who can act as a guide to the local culture and its distinctive idiom. In one low-income neighborhood in Syracuse, New York, a woman known as "the mayor" of the neighborhood regularly welcomes her neighbors for evening gatherings on her front porch. She would qualify as a good informant.

5. Gain trust. Gaining trust may serve as an important prelude to getting someone to talk about themselves. Trust may not be such an issue for someone known to be outspoken on public issues, but it may be more essential if the interview concerns sensitive matters.

6. Establish rapport. Developing a strong connection between you and the person you interview, can open the door to a deeper dive into important information. Establishing rapport might not be crucial in some cases. For example, if your goal is to survey as many people as possible on a given issue, establishing a strong connection might take too long. Neighborhood surveys do not typically require deep rapport with everyone you poll.

7. Collect the data. How will you record what you find out? The most thorough techniques (video or audio), may seem the best, yet they might be the most intrusive. In some cases, note-taking may even have an off-putting effect, so you might try taking mental notes and writing it up in private soon afterward. Best practices for collecting data include (1) taking notes regularly and writing them down immediately; (2) writing everything down even if it seems unimportant; (3) trying to be inconspicuous in talking notes; and (4) analyzing your notes often.3

The Roving Listener Style

Broadway United Methodist Church in Indianapolis offers one example of how to conduct interviews in the neighborhood. The church hired a "roving listener" to wander through the neighborhood and spend time with people he encountered. This person focused not on neighbors' needs but on their gifts, passions, and hopes for the community. The interviewer asked these questions:

- What three things do you do well enough that you could teach others how to do?
- What three things would you like to learn?
- Who, besides God and me, is going with you along the way?5

Nothing beats a direct one-on-one interview for learning about the community and building relationships. Sometimes we may be surprised by the willingness of our neighbors to express their faith in personal, direct terms outside the worship setting. One researcher, who conducted one-on-one interviews for a faith-based community organization, tells about a neighbor who wanted to pray for her interviewer as the conversation concluded. "Lord Jesus," she said, "help us work together to change things here. Thank you for this new friend. Give us your Spirit and your power, and we will turn this city around."7

2. Ibid., 13.